

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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OUT OF THE RUT

Ideas and Activities in Brief

Congratulations to Ald. D. B. Foster, of Leeds, who for many years has been a member of the Agents' Association, and who, we understand, is now the Lord Mayor-Elect for Leeds. We wish Mr. Foster a prosperous and pleasant year of office.

Whatever the result of the By-election at Cheltenham our local friends must be commended for the splendid efforts they had made in this Division against very great odds. Several months ago £150 had been raised and put in the bank in readiness for the General Election. Some other Parties will be envious of this achievement. The local comrades did not hesitate a moment about plunging into the By-election, and staking their reserves upon this and even of pledging their credit for a further sum in order to enable the By-election to be fought. Incidentally Mr. J. H. Round, the agent, has issued a collecting card of a new and striking character. Readers of the "L.O." who would like a specimen might send a few coppers to the election fund and a stamped addressed envelope to Mr. J. H. Round, Labour Hall, High Street, Cheltenham.

With the approach of the General Election it is high time for every Local Party to be possessed of the Labour Party's election parcel. Not only does the parcel, which is supplied at £1 1s., carriage paid, supply every necessary form for the conduct of a Parliamentary Election, but a study of the forms imparts a mass of information necessary to the prospective Election Agent. The man who obtains a mastery of these forms well beforehand is far better equipped than the person who only begins to look at them when the time for use arrives. The Party's canvass cards can also be obtained now. They are published at a very low price, are of good material, and they are easy to handle. It is a profound blunder to delay ordering canvass cards till the last

moment when the rush of orders and railway delays may involve fatal loss of time.

Our readers will be interested in the following registration report which is that of Mr. H. Eastwood, the Labour Agent at Bolton. Most agents would be proud of such a record as this.

REGISTRATION REPORT, AUGUST, 1928.

Claims Presented to Court and Allowed
without attendance.

LABOUR	61
LIBERAL	19
TORY	39
TOTAL	119

Claims Presented to Court for
Appearance.

Claims Presented	Lost	Won
LABOUR 121	28	93
LIBERAL 9	4	5
TORY 133	85	48
TOTALS 263	117	146

Previously on Register	90,807
Anticipated on Next Register	92,763

Labour's Claims Secured.

Claims sent in in <i>advance</i> and allowed	523
Claims sent in to Court and allowed	61
Claims sent in to Court and won	93
TOTAL SECURED	677
TOTAL LOST	28
CLAIMS MADE	705

The Wolverhampton Labour Party (Agent and Organiser, Mr. W. H. Jacob) have made the most of their opportunity by publishing the Wolves' Fixture List for 1928/29 in handy pocket form, together with the photo of the Prospective Labour Candidate, Mr. W.

J. Brown. The Party colours happen to be the same as those of the local football team and the card is printed in these colours.

Probably the biggest co-operative effort of its kind among Labour Parties in the Provinces is the Annual Leicestershire and District Gala. The sixth Annual Gala and Carnival was held in the De Montfort Hall and Gardens, Leicester, on Saturday, July 28th, and was organised by the following Labour Parties:— Leicester Labour Party (three Divisions), Harborough Labour Party, Bosworth D.L.P., Loughborough D.L.P., Melton D.L.P., Nuneaton D.L.P., with the Leicester I.L.P. in addition. We understand that the total income, including that from the Prize Draw, was £940 and this means that each participating body is to draw something over £100. This affair which has been a continuous success for some years indicates a practical method by which a central town can help and co-operate with the surrounding constituencies, and we congratulate Mr. W. Howard, M.A., Labour Agent, Leicester, who, we believe, initiated this movement, on the success which has attended it.

Mr. Gilbert Treacher, of 94 King's Avenue, Watford, has been kind enough to send us a report of progress in the Watford Division. The Watford Labour Party is one of the few who employ a collector for taking members' contributions, and very considerable success has attended this method.

We understand that the individual membership has now reached 1,500, a nett increase of 700 during the three years during which Mr. Treacher has been employed as collector and canvasser in the town. The average subscription is 3/3 per year and is paid either monthly, quarterly, or annually. Fresh members have been turning in recently as the results of a special canvass at the rate of 20 per week, and it is hoped to increase the membership by a solid 200 members. In addition to the above figures there are 300 members in the Division of Watford which makes the total 1,800. The average subscription for the total is 3/- per year. These are excellent figures, for Watford, as one of London's bedroom constituencies, is by no means an easy nut to crack.

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IMPORTANT SERIES

Preparation for the General Election

BY THE EDITOR.

ARTICLE VI.

The Women's Department.

There is one department I have not yet dealt with and concerning which something must be said before I leave the question of the central control of an election. The work of women in a Labour Parliamentary contest is one of the most difficult matters upon which to generalise, partly because the women themselves are as yet by no means agreed as to the most effective method of making their influence felt, and also because the power of women in electoral contests is as yet only in its infancy, and experience has yet to teach all concerned a great deal.

Elections are still mainly in the hands of men, and it will probably be some years before the number of men and women engaged in political organisation approximates to their respective proportions among the electorate. At the present time, therefore, there are few sound lines of organisational principles or practice that can be taken as a guide, and in the main each constituency must solve for itself the problem of how best to use its women power. I do not propose to deal here with the question of how to influence the women vote, for that is a matter apart into which a new complication has entered by the extension of the Franchise, and an article which will touch on this matter appears on another page of this issue.

Meantime, I should like to express my disapproval of an expression I have heard that the functions of our women workers are solely to deal with the women's vote. This is a mistaken notion and I cannot visualise the day when women can be confined to work among their sisters and as a corollary men will be confined to effort among themselves.

Election organisation demands the services of men and women in every department. It may be that women have a special task in regard to the women vote just as men can, owing to their peculiar position, bring more influence to bear on the Trades Union vote. But Committee Room work, general canvassing, the campaign of meetings, and each other activity are

fields in which men and women can, and should, work side by side.

I lay stress on the importance of women speakers for general political meetings. In my opinion it is possible to overstress the necessity for special Women's Meetings and though these are certainly necessary the mixed political meeting, the meeting which husband and wife both attend, possesses an established value which the exclusive meeting ought not to be allowed to jeopardise. The exact proportions of each type of meeting that should be fixed in a given contest depends upon the nature of the local women electorate, and the extent to which their political education has been carried.

Women in Committee Rooms are of decided value. If local Committee Rooms can be jointly managed so much the better. Women voters cannot be expected to drop into Committee Rooms and to accept them as Headquarters so long as Committee Rooms continue as passable imitations of club smoke-rooms, or lounges. Bright, clean Committee Rooms should be aimed at, with at least one woman indoor helper, and the smoke-room atmosphere must be banished.

Many women become adepts at canvassing. The really persuasive woman canvasser is a power and generally more so among the men than among the women. Hence it appears that some mixed canvassing is desirable. On the other hand there is a type of lady, generally fairly strong on women's questions, who is inclined to rate when talking politics, and she does not get very far in canvassing the male electorate. These ladies are best confined to organising the women vote, but I dare not venture to suggest how the differentiation between the ladies is to be made, nor who is to allot them their appropriate tasks. I am afraid that some people will persist in taking on the wrong job.

Local Work and Workers.

And now we can leave the managerial side of an election and turn to those aspects of the fight with which the local worker is more peculiarly con-

cerned. It may be useful here to sum up the functions which are central functions and to indicate those which come under the heading of local work. I have classified election work under seven headings and it has been seen that all the following matters are of central concern: (1) Press and Publicity work; (2) Meetings campaign; (3) Organisation of Transport; (4) General Organisation; (5) Organisation of Clerical Work; (6) Financial Control; (7) Women's Department.

But under each of the above headings my remarks have shown where local work comes in. Summarised, it will amount to finding workers, canvassing, tracing removals, literature distribution, stewarding meetings, staffing Committee Rooms, fetching up voters, securing nominations and making reports to the centre. One could add to these activities in certain cases the arrangement of meetings under central direction, a certain amount of writing up and clerical work, taking collections, securing lent vehicles, and sundry other matters.

I will deal with these questions in the order given but there is one problem first to be dealt with. It is what should be done with the normal ward or Local Party organisation during an election.

To "dissolve" or not?

I have frequently heard it advised that during an election a Party should be "dissolved"—whatever that may mean—and should come together again after the election is over. I disagree with this advice. Dissolution which is to be followed by a resurrection is no real dissolution at all. It is something which appears to me as unnecessary and insincere. The course is undesirable also because in most cases a Party nowadays does some amount of trading. What is to become of the funds? What is to become of control over this and that responsibility of the Party? I know of Parties who own houses, another owns a picture palace, another runs a club, and still others, newspapers. When the Party partnership is dissolved what becomes of the assets and liabilities?

In former days the object of dissolving a political association was to get rid of responsibility for unrestrained acts of members of the association. It was assumed that in accepting the aid of a political association the candidate accepted each person as his "agent"

(this term is used in a different sense to election agent). I have never quite seen how this could be so, but, anyway, circumstances have changed. Political Parties are no longer associations of a handful of people or at most a few hundred. They are big and complicated organisms with permanence marked all over them. Dissolution seems to me to be a subterfuge which an election judge would see through.

Nevertheless it must be remembered that a Local Party's work during an election must be under the direction of the appointed election agent: and it is desirable to make a clear demarcation between what is business connected with the contest and what is other business.

Frequent meetings of the Local Party during an election must, however, be avoided. Too much publicity for one's plans and divided responsibility are only two of the objections that can be urged. If meetings for commercial business are necessary let them be as brief as possible. If the Party meets to discuss arrangements and plans for the election, or questions of management, then one meeting should be made sufficient or at most two meetings in a normal contest.

This brings me to the question of what use is to be made of the existing ward and polling district machinery. It all depends on the completeness of that machinery. A difference in the nature of local committees may complicate what I am about to say. Thus in some places the Local Party or the Ward Committee are financial bodies, responsible for local elections and for policies. In other places the polling district committee is merely the field machine for reaching the voter. In the latter case new workers brought in during the contest may be temporarily attached to the Local Committees even if they are not members. They have really no influence within the Party except that of helping to perform local work. But Local Parties or ward committees of the more responsible kind ought not to be flooded by ephemeral election workers. These persons may be called into workers' meetings but Party control proper must be confined to orthodox channels.

The Hunt for Workers.

From what I have said it follows that I assume that at most Parliament-

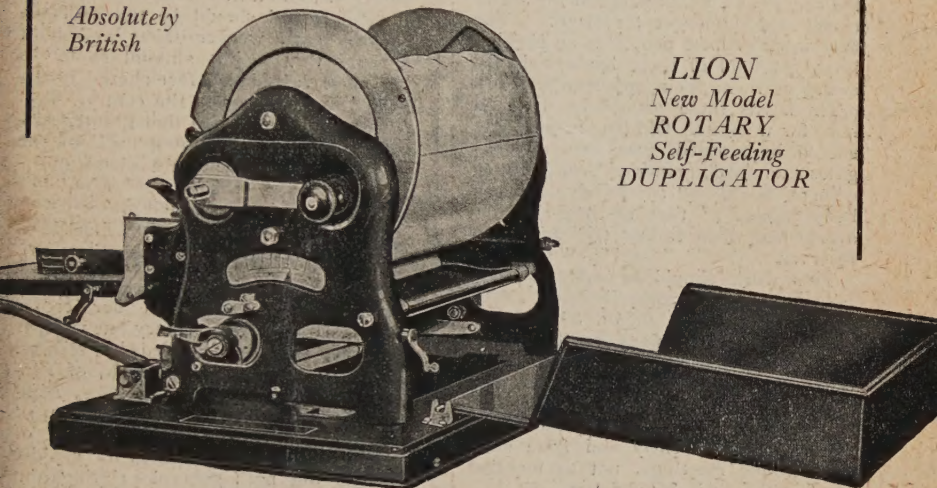
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any Elections workers come in who are not normally active within the Party. It would be a foolish person who would seek to discourage such aid. There is a type of mind that only works under the excitement of the time. Some of the best election workers I have known are only to be discovered at election times. Besides these there is a big body of more or less useful workers who, in the course of time, pass out of the active ranks and often get forgotten. The first work of local people at an election is to get hold of these backwoodsmen and give them their opportunity. In other words there should be a grand hunt for workers. Old lists of members should be scoured, past lists of delegates examined; names of Trades Union officers listed, and the minds of everybody jogged so that no one shall be overlooked when calling up our hidden reserves.

This work should be systematically undertaken at the commencement of the contest and names should be reported to the centre. Circulars should then go out to these people with cordial invitations to both public meetings and workers' meetings. Work on these lines for a whole week is infinitely more productive than an early and false start with public meetings, not to mention the fact that it is far cheaper.

I am afraid that canvassers themselves frequently overlook their opportunities for securing workers while canvassing. The enthusiastic supporter can often be asked to implement (blessed word nowadays) his good wishes by distributing a little literature or by stewarding at a public meeting. It is in this way that the army grows and that the soldiers' battle becomes the real thing.

Canvassing.

Canvassing is essentially a local task. It is the one job in elections which is the test of effective organisation and co-operation between localities and the centre. Canvassing, though a local job, must, to be properly effective, be reported upon constantly and frequently and the results passed over to other hands to be recorded and used as I have indicated in previous articles.

A system then is essential in organising the canvass. The workers must first know and understand the method of canvassing adopted. If it is the single card system—quite the best in

most cases—workers must understand how to use the cards and what to do with those they have finished with and with those they have missed during the visitation. If pasted registers or some other makeshift plan is adopted there is always more provision to make for copying out the results of the canvass. When "dishing out" the work workers should not be overloaded. They should be urged to do a little and do it quickly. Careful record should be taken of the canvass each worker takes and if it appears that a big amount is to be left uncanvassed this fact should be reported immediately to the centre.

I have always found that greater success attends the "dishing out" of the canvass if it is done at a workers' meeting.

(To be continued.)

A LABOUR PRINTER.

Our readers will be interested in the illustration appearing on our centre pages of the fine rotary newspaper machine recently installed by Messrs. J. S. Reynolds and Co., Ltd., of Ripley. This machine is the latest addition to a complete modern equipment which includes the latest models of linotype and other facilities for rapidly turning out both general printing and newspaper work.

This firm has specialised for several years in the production of Labour newspapers and News Sheets, and a large number of such publications printed at Ripley are in our possession or have come under our notice from time to time. The trade is by no means localised for Labour newspapers in all parts of the country appear to deal with Messrs. Reynolds and Co., and to find satisfaction in doing so. The fact that a number of papers are printed at one place results in a facility for quick delivery and reasonable prices, the advantages being reaped by Local Labour Parties.

Parties proposing to run a local News Sheet or even an Election Special cannot do better than write for specimens and prices. Quotations are given either for setting up from "copy" or for supplying the whole or part of the literary matter. We understand that arrangements are being made for topical cartoons and other special Labour features to be at the disposal of customers.

THE EQUAL FRANCHISE ACT EXPLAINED.

[The following is a report of a lecture delivered to meetings of Labour Agents at Leeds and Bath by the Editor of the "Labour Organiser,"]

The object of the Representation Equal Franchise Act is innocently stated in its preamble to be "to assimilate the Franchise for men and women in respect of Parliamentary and Local Government Elections; and for purposes consequential thereon."

That the promoters had other and far more questionable objects in view than that of doing justice to an unjustly disenfranchised section of the community is hardly open to doubt when one notes the sound advantages which the Conservative Party may reap by the placing of this measure upon the Statute Book. A great extension of plural voting was not a contemplated effect of the demand for equal franchises, yet this is what has taken place and there are certain constituencies—one held by a distinguished member of H.M. Government—where the Conservative organisers may rest in peace confident that the increase in the number of plural voters will put them out of danger for at any rate two or three General Elections.

The Act also definitely increases the amount of money which may be spent at a Parliamentary Election, for though it decreases slightly the amount which may be spent in a County Division the scale for Boroughs remains untouched. The huge increase in the electorate about to take place means a correspondingly huge increase in the maximum amount that may be spent in wooing the electors. In this way the Government again takes a mean advantage of its Labour opponents.

But it is when one examines the political tendencies or rather the past political education of the mass of the new voters that one begins to suspect that the sole object of the Equal Franchise Act was to secure a new lease of life for the present administration by enfranchising a section of the community from whom they hoped much. A new and disturbing factor at the next election in the shape of several million new voters might be expected in any case to upset the best calculations of political organisers and the placidity of those who calculated on holding this or winning that constituency. But it was

not a gamble that was meant; and however just the measure was, and however much we welcome this tardy justice to the disenfranchised, it is becoming fairly clear that the real purpose was to snatch another victory by the enfranchisement of more Tory supporters.

If one took the proportions of the total vote which each Party secured at the last election as a criterion of the political tendencies of the newly enfranchised section of the community it would be seen that there is a majority of the new voters definitely opposed to Labour. But one has to remember that the Labour vote included the Trades Union vote; and among the newly enfranchised voters, Trades Unionism exists in a lower percentage than among the men and women whose votes were cast in 1924. Therefore the calculation would not be sound. And when one remembers, and daily notes, the meagre quantity of Labour literature, or of Labour education, that finds its way among the younger women, one wakes to a full realisation of the possibility of the new vote being at the present time fairly heavily against the Labour Party.

I do not say this as a pessimist, for my own forte is optimism. But to be forewarned is to be forearmed. The Party has in the past sadly neglected special work among the younger generations, but there is yet time by special methods and special attempts at education to reverse the position before the poll of the people is taken. These matters I shall refer to again later in my address.

To come then to the Act itself it is one of eight clauses and one schedule. Its accomplishments are threefold. It (1) assimilates the franchise as between men and women, (2) varies the amount which may be spent as election expenses, and (3) varies the registration dates and amends details in registration.

One prime effect of the Act not commonly noted is that it confers a new franchise upon men both for Parliamentary and Local Government purposes; by, as will be seen presently, conferring the vote on the husband of a wife who may be qualified in certain respects.

We will now take the clauses of the Act one by one.

The new franchise for Parliamentary purposes is as follows:—

(Section to be substituted for the said section one.)

“(1) A person shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector for a constituency (other than a university constituency), if he or she is of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity; and

(a) has the requisite residence qualification; or

(b) has the requisite business premises qualification; or

(c) is the husband or wife of a person entitled to be so registered in respect of a business premises qualification.

(2) A person, in order to have the requisite residence qualification or business premises qualification for a constituency—

(a) must on the last day of the qualifying period be *residing in premises* in the constituency, or occupying business premises in the constituency, as the case may be; and

(b) must during the whole of the qualifying period have resided in premises, or occupied business premises, as the case may be, in the constituency, or in another constituency within the same parliamentary borough or parliamentary county, or within a parliamentary borough or parliamentary county contiguous to that borough or county, or separated from that borough or county by water, not exceeding at the nearest point six miles in breadth, measured in the case of tidal water from low-water mark.

For the purposes of this subsection the administrative county of London shall be treated as a parliamentary borough.

(3) The expression ‘business premises’ in this section means land or other premises of the yearly value of not less than ten pounds occupied for the purpose of the business, profession, or trade of the person to be registered.”
(Section to be substituted for the said section two.)

“A person shall be entitled to be registered as a parliamentary elector for a university constituency if he or she is of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity, and has received a degree (other than an honorary

degree) at any university forming, or forming part of, the constituency, or in the case of the Scottish universities is qualified under section twenty-seven of the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act, 1868, or, if a woman, has been admitted to and passed the final examination, and kept under the conditions required of women by the university, the period of residence, necessary for a man to obtain a degree at any university forming, or forming part of, a university constituency which did not at the time the examination was passed admit women to degrees.”

Here then we see that though the frame of the old Act is retained sweeping changes are made by substituting the word “person” for man. The next change is a new sub-section which entitles a person to be registered who is the *husband or wife* of a person entitled to be so registered in respect of a *business premises qualification*. This is where we get a wide extension of plural voting. In future not only are women to get the business premises vote, but their husbands are to come on as well and not only these, but the wives of men having this qualification. This is a “reform” to which a Labour Government in power would require to turn its early attention. The sooner this handicap to a democratic party is swept away the better.

Expressed simply then, persons in future will be entitled to the Parliamentary franchise in four ways provided they are of full age and not subject to legal incapacity. These ways are:—

1. Residence within the constituency or contiguous constituencies.
 2. Occupation of land or premises of £10 value or more for business purposes.
 3. By being married to a business premises voter.
 4. By University qualification.
- (To be continued.)*

For considerations of space we have been compelled to hold over the remainder of the above article, in order to make room for the following extract from the Home Office Circular dated 27th August regarding the Equal Franchise Bill. As will appear from our reprint of the Order in Council on another page a general issue of forms to householders will shortly take place. The Home Office instructions to Regis-

trations Officers in the matter are of great importance and are contained in the following paragraphs :—

"The Secretary of State has had under consideration the procedure to be adopted for ascertaining the names of persons who will be entitled to be registered in the new register of 1929.

"By Rule 6 in the First Schedule to the Act of 1918 the Registration Officer is required to cause a house to house or other sufficient inquiry to be made, and the Returns from householders, etc., on Forms A and D serve for the purpose of compelling information to be given which cannot otherwise be obtained and of testing the accuracy of the information given in response to enquiries at the door.

"The practice in some registration areas appears to have been to prepare the electors lists from the information which is supplied verbally to the canvassers or is within their personal knowledge subject to such verification as is possible from records relating to previous registers and the rate books or other available documents. Where this practice prevails, the use of Form A has been limited almost entirely to cases where difficulty is experienced in obtaining information by personal application.

"In a number of registration areas, however, the Forms A are delivered in the course of canvass to every occupier of a dwelling house, unfurnished lodgings and other property. The Secretary of State understands that it is the experience of Registration Officers who adopt this course that a high percentage of the forms are returned properly filled up, and that the returns are of very great value for correction of errors in the information given to the canvassers.

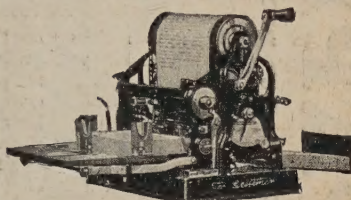
"The Secretary of State has come to the conclusion that, on the present occasion when the franchise is being extended to so large a number of persons, all occupiers should so far as practicable be required to complete the appropriate form of return. It is obviously important, if an occupier is not at home at the time of the canvasser's visit and the particulars are obtained from some other resident, that the particulars should be verified from a signed statement by the occupier or householder in the prescribed form, but it appears to the Secretary of State that a return in all cases will facilitate

(Continued on Page 172.)

52 Labour Agents

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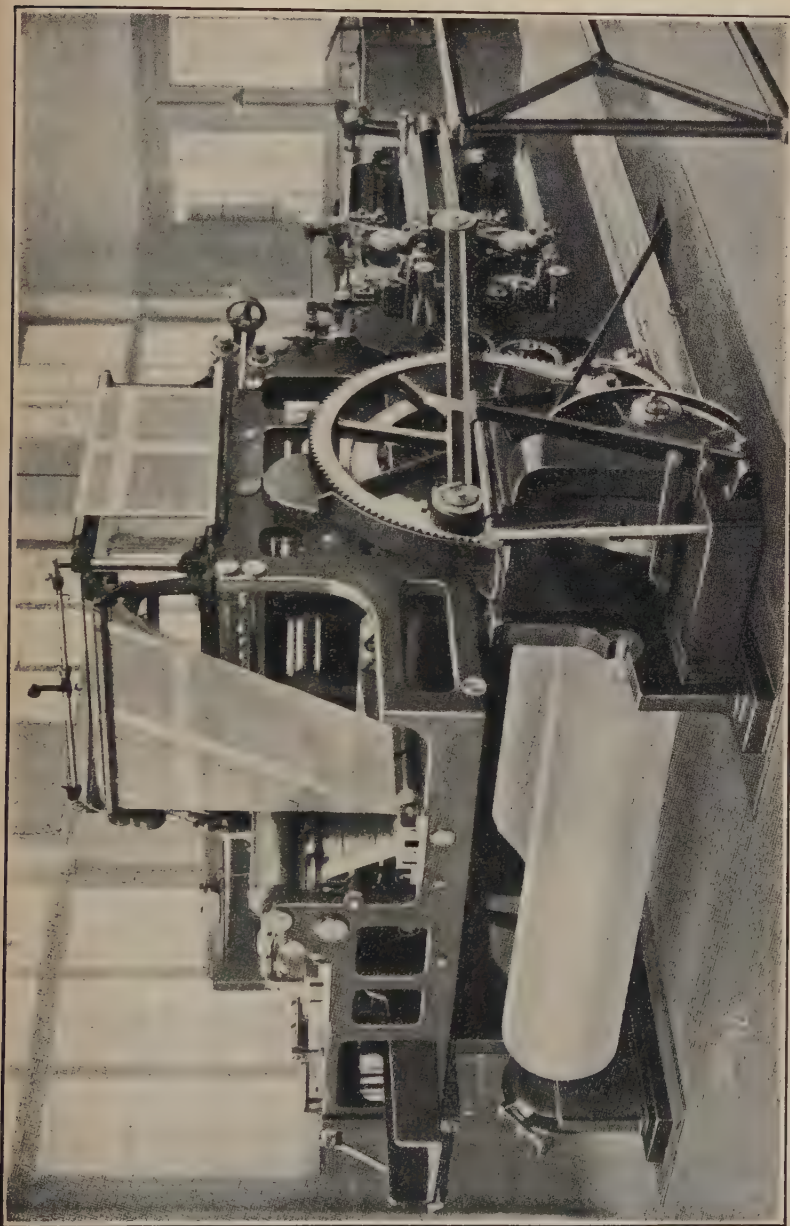
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DABS AT DUPLICATING. **Interesting Lecture by Mr. A.** **Guest, Labour Agent, West** **Bromwich.**

At a recent meeting of Midland members of the National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents, an interesting lecture was delivered by Mr. Albert Guest, Labour Agent, West Bromwich, entitled "Dabs at Duplicating."

In his commencing remarks Mr. Guest traced in an interesting manner the earliest attempts to multiply the written word. He reminded his hearers of some of the crude methods of the past, and pointed out the high stage of development which had been reached in this art by modern methods and modern machines.

Mr. Guest proceeded to outline the many services which these same modern methods and machines rendered to the Labour Agent. Not only summonses of meetings, circulars, personal letters, reports and propaganda matter could be duplicated, but the duplicator competed now with the printing machine in the production of small news sheets and magazines.

Duplicating need no longer be a messy job and with modern improvements in stencils astonishingly long runs were possible. Mr. Guest produced a sample of the stencils he used, supplied by The Lion Company, Ltd., and illustrated in a practical manner the rough usage to which these stencils might be subject without affecting their serviceability in any degree whatever. These stencils could be used again and again and, in fact, they appeared to be indestructible.

Mr. Guest's lecture was supplemented by a practical demonstration on a Lion's Rotary Duplicator by his daughter, Miss Guest. Miss Guest showed, among a number of other instructive demonstrations, how a drawing could be produced with ease and facility by the use of the special tracing board supplied by the Lion Company and how almost any design could be rapidly traced on a stencil by these means.

A number of specimens of really excellent work done on the duplicator were passed round the room and these included the production in quarto booklet form of a complicated balance sheet and report together with a ten-page Club Magazine of exceptionally

attractive get-up and containing many illustrations.

The speaker proceeded to explain the various kinds of duplicators that were available and the respective uses and values of same. The prices ranged from the few pounds that might be paid for a flat duplicator capable of hard wear and the production of much useful work, to a figure nearer £50 or £60 for a machine capable almost of any production and of a speed rate of 100 copies per minute. Some useful hints were also given concerning the stitching and general production and issue of duplicated magazines.

We are glad to say that Mr. Guest is at an early date to supplement his lecture by a further instructive address entitled "Printers' Pie."

AGENCY CHANGES AND NEW APPOINTMENTS.

Carlisle.—Mr. J. Kelsall has now ceased as Labour Agent.

Carlisle.—Mr. A. C. Powell has now been appointed full-time agent. Address: Trades Hall, Scotch Street, Carlisle.

Hammersmith.—Mr. Harold Riley has now ceased as Labour Agent, having transferred to Finsbury.

Finsbury.—Mr. Harold Riley has been appointed full-time agent. Present address: 295, Goswell Road, London, E.C.1.

Sowerby.—Mr. M. Crossley has now ceased to be agent.

Sowerby.—Mr. J. W. Singleton has been appointed full-time agent. Address: Bridge End, Halifax Road, Todmorton, Yorks.

Dartford.—Mr. H. V. Mell has been appointed full-time agent. Address: 16 Lowfield Street, Dartford.

Brentford and Chiswick.—Mr. Edgar Lewis has been appointed full-time agent. Address: 329 High Road, Chiswick.

North-West Camberwell.—Mr. Frank Potter has been appointed full-time agent. Address: 74 Church Street, London, S.E.5.

CORRECTION OF ADDRESSES.

Wigan.—Coun. R. Lewis, Secretary and Agent, 29, King Street, Wigan.

Preston.—Mr. W. E. Morris, Labour Institute, Lancaster Road, Preston.

East Ham South.—Mr. Frank H. Edwards, agent and organiser, 387 Barking Road, East Ham, E.C.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION NOTES

With an increased army of candidates in the field the Labour movement is looking hopefully to the coming Municipal Elections to evidence the progress our policies and Party have made with the electorate.

The following notes have been composed rather to supplement what has previously appeared in the "Labour Organiser" than to provide a complete guide to Municipal electioneering. In previous years we have dealt with sundry aspects of the problem of wooing the electorate. In this article we shall confine ourselves principally to the elucidation of points on which we have received recent requests for enlightenment.

The Ward Meetings.

Probably one of the best rewards which Local Parties receive as a result of fighting Municipal Elections is the new life and vigour which is put into the ward machinery. In the Parliamentary Election the Ward Committees are, of course, also of prime importance, but it is in Municipal Elections, where the full force and fury of each contest is particular to its ward, that a contest without ward machinery is like talking of fighting battles without armies. Not that the attempt is unknown, for we have observed Local Parties, centralising themselves for a whole town, putting up candidates and trying to run elections with central machinery and no local parts. Failure lies along that road.

Both by the constitution of the Labour Party and the commonsense of electioneering the first step in a Municipal contest is to call together the Ward Committee. An attenuated Ward Committee is no good for the purpose.

Under the Party Constitution the ward committees consist of the whole of the resident affiliated and individual members and while in few cases could this provision be made to work if everybody chose to exercise their functions, it does permit of an infinitely wider and larger committee than is usually to be found.

The first work of a ward committee should be to increase its own members by seeking other workers. Lists of names of past workers should be gone through and possible new workers suggested with the idea of asking all these

to again function in the ward committee during the election. Not that the ward committee is now going to take the place of the Divisional or Local Labour Party, or that it is actually going to take over the final conduct of the election, but it is going to do the really effective work of canvassing the electorate, distributing the literature, and providing the man and woman power by which the election will be conducted.

Committees at Work.

The ward committee should organise the canvass and literature distribution. It should find the marshals for the meetings and men and women for the Committee Rooms and the staff of fetchers-up for each polling station on polling day.

Sizes of wards vary from a few hundred voters in the small Boroughs to many thousands in the larger ones, but generally speaking the functions are the same in either case, though there may be some difference in the method of going to work as between a small and a large ward. In the small ward the ward committee may be able to keep its hand on every part of the ward without sub-dividing. One central ward meeting and ward Committee Room may suffice for the whole period. But in the larger wards frequently these have already been divided into polling districts and virtually a ward committee is required for each polling district.

The responsibility of a ward Committee is to its Local or Divisional Party. In other words the Local or Divisional Party is the superior body with which direct contact is made. Where a large ward is split up it is generally most convenient for each polling district to have direct contact with the Divisional or Local Party during the election rather than there should be an intermediary ward committee.

Frequent large ward committee meetings are not desirable during a contest. Two, or at the most three, big ward meetings are the utmost that are necessary or desirable in any contest, and these are mostly required for the purpose of report and instruction, and to encourage all workers. The real aim should be to divide an area again and again until not only every polling district but every street or block of streets

or houses has got its own little Committee working with its own captain. When this stage is reached there is little time for central meetings because the workers are virtually in committee every night upon the very necessary work which they have in hand. One can never get too many workers and if there is any appearance of this it is evidence that sufficient dividing up has not been done. The fewer houses the little committees may have to look after the closer will be the contact with the electorate and the bigger will be the poll.

Nominations.

Nominations provide a good deal of worry for those unused to the procedure. It is advisable that some reliable person should be told off who will give exclusive attention to securing as large a number as possible of valid nomination papers.

Nomination papers must be provided by the Town Clerk and usually no difficulty is experienced in securing the required number. There is, of course, a limit to the number which might reasonably be asked for by any one representative of the Party, but as any person qualified to nominate may demand a nomination paper there should be no practical difficulty in getting free of charge all the papers that are required.

The printed form is not at all compulsory though it is advisable. Provided, however, a typewritten or handwritten nomination is in the form prescribed a nomination otherwise good would be perfectly in order.

The form of nomination differs from that of a Parliamentary Election in that the addresses of the subscriber and assentors are not required. Instead, the number on the Burgess roll must be given. This is a provision which minimises the risk of non-qualified electors signing nomination papers.

Electors must sign their christian name first, such as John Thomas, but not Thomas, John. The greatest care should be taken to see that persons sign in the manner in which they are described on the register. This saves confusion and possible objection. There are circumstances under which a variation in the subscription is explainable and would pass muster, but in most cases the evidence which would be required at the hearing of objections is

not readily obtainable. The risk of rejection is ordinarily too great to induce a responsible person to rely on a nomination paper if any signature is open to objection in this way.

A man who cannot write may subscribe his mark, but here again there is a slight element of risk. A person may sign William, Albert, Henry, Frederick, etc., if this is the usual signature, or his christian name by initials only, but it is risky. Where, for instance, two voters of the same initials resided in one house it is easy to go wrong with the register number, or for an allegation to be laid that the signature of the one voter had been subscribed by the other.

It is important that the nomination paper should be duly filled in before any signature is appended. The signatures of the proposer and seconder should follow in that order and *before* the signature of any assessor is given. It is also important to remember that each person signing a nomination paper should be entitled to vote *for the particular ward* to which the nomination applies.

No person must sign a paper for more than one ward nor must a person subscribe to nomination papers beyond the number of Councillors to be elected for his particular ward. In other words an elector must not sign more than one paper for any one candidate nor more papers than there are vacancies. As to the qualification of a candidate to be elected this is outside the scope of the present article and has been dealt with elsewhere.

Official Precedure.

Nomination papers must be delivered by the candidate or his proposer or seconder at the Town Clerk's office seven days at least before the day of election and before five o'clock in the afternoon of the last day for delivery of nomination papers. The seven days referred to must be clear seven days and on the day following the last day for the delivery of nomination papers, the Mayor is required to sit for a sufficient time between the hours of two and four p.m. for the purpose of deciding on the validity of every objection made in writing to a nomination paper.

Note that no other person but the candidate, his proposer, or seconder must deliver the nomination paper. If they do it is void, so also is a nomination paper void received after hours.

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The Mayor has no right to deal with any question of the qualification of a particular candidate. He is concerned only with whether or no a candidate has been legally nominated, that is, whether the form has been received in proper course, and whether the description, form, and signatures are all in order. For this purpose he should scrupulously examine each signature and the corresponding entry in the register.

The residence required to be stated concerning a candidate is his abode, not the address of his office, or place of business. As to the candidate's description, this ought never to be ambiguous or misleading.

At the sitting which the Mayor will make for the purposes of 'objection only the candidate "and his representative" may attend. This in practice means the candidate and his principal clerk or agent. Enough will be gathered from the above to show on what lines to proceed should opportunity offer to lay an objection to the papers of the other side.

Committee Rooms.

The conduct of Municipal Elections is so often in the hands of inexperienced electioneers that a word of warning is necessary. Committee Rooms must not be used which are licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors or on which refreshment of any kind whether food or drink is ordinarily sold for consumption on the premises. Premises where any intoxicating liquor is supplied to members of a club, society or association are prohibited. This means that it is illegal to use our Labour Clubs as Committee Rooms. They are illegal also for holding public meetings at a Municipal Election. The prohibition does not extend to any part of the premises mentioned which is ordinarily let as offices or for holding public meetings if there is a separate entrance and no direct communication with the parts of the premises where liquor or refreshment is supplied.

It is rarely that any candidate exceeds the number of Committee Rooms allowed by law to be hired. There is, however, a limit and a scale. Summarised, the position is that there may be one Committee Room hired for each ward, but if the electorate exceeds 2,000 there may be an additional Committee Room for every 2,000 electors, or part of 2,000 electors. There is no

limit to the number of Committee Rooms which may be lent and every endeavour should be made to get Committee Rooms freely lent by supporters. An objection to lending rooms is very often not so much because the accommodation is grudged but because of the cleaning afterwards required. It is sometimes possible to get rooms lent if an undertaking is given to have them cleaned on the following day. If the cleaning is paid for the person who lends the room should defray the bill and the item then on reimbursement becoming a payment for rent. In many districts voluntary offers of cleaning are obtainable.

Clerks and Messengers.

A scale is also laid down for the number of clerks and messengers who may be employed. Persons may be employed as either clerks or messengers provided the total number of persons permitted to be employed is not exceeded. The scale is two persons per ward and if the number of electors exceeds 2,000 an additional person for every thousand electors or part of a thousand. Our readers are reminded that these provisions differ from a Parliamentary Election. In a Parliamentary Election the number of messengers and clerks are separately calculated.

The employment of number takers at polling places is illegal, unless such persons are employed as messengers, in which case care should be taken that the number permitted is not exceeded.

(Concluded from Page 165.)

the complete and accurate preparation of the register.

"Accordingly the Secretary of State directs that the appropriate form of return shall be delivered in the course of the house to house inquiry at all premises and that the Registration Officer shall make arrangements for the purpose.

"It will be borne in mind that persons who fail to give the required information or who give false information are liable to proceedings under Rule 35 in Schedule I to the Act of 1918. If in any case failure to make a return appears to be due to wilful neglect on the part of the occupier or householder it may be desirable to repeat the service of the form with such formalities as will in the event of continued non-compliance be sufficient to support proceedings for enforcement of the statutory penalty."



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REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (EQUAL FRANCHISE) ACT

Important Order in Council.

THE NEW FORMS AND DATES.

We print below the essential clauses of a new Order in Council dated 14th August, 1928, prescribing various matters under the above-named Act. This circular is of considerable importance and is commented upon in this issue in the article on the "Equal Franchise Act, 1928."

A further Order in Council is contemplated in which the forms of claim will be dealt with. It will be noted that they are not included in the present Order.

Registration Dates for 1929 Register.

1. For the purpose of the register of electors to be made in the year 1929, the registration dates shall, as respects the several matters specified in Column 1 of the following Schedule, be the dates specified in Column 2 as regards England and Wales and Northern Ireland, and in Column 3 as regards Scotland.

SCHEDULE.

Subject matter.	England and Wales and Northern Ireland.	Scotland.
1.	2.	3.
Publication of electors lists	1929. 24th January	1929. 16th February.
Last day for notice of objections to electors lists.	9th February	2nd March.
Last day for claims	16th February	2nd March.
Publication of list of objections to electors lists.	22nd February	9th March.
Publication of list of claimants	22nd February	9th March.
Last day for claims as absent voters ...	27th February	12th March.
Last day for notification of desire by naval or military voter not to be placed on absent voters list	27th February	12th March.
Last day for objections to claimants ..	27th February	14th March.
Publication of list of objections to claimants—as soon as practicable after	27th February	14th March.

Out Voters.

2. For the purposes of the register of electors to be made in the year 1929 the Order shall be modified as follows:—

- (a) In Rule 4 (2) of the Order, which relates to claims by persons residing outside the polling districts in which they are entitled to be registered to vote at the polling places of other polling districts, there shall be substituted the 27th day of February for the 18th day of August, the 14th day of March for the 3rd day of September and the 27th day of February for the 18th day of September.

Length of time for publication of documents.

- (b) The following Schedule shall be substituted for Schedule IX. of the Order—

SCHEDULE.*Dates until which Documents to be kept published..*

Nature of Document. (a)	England and Wales. (b)	Scotland. (c)	Northern Ireland. (d)
Electors lists	17th February	13th March	17th February
Notice as to mode of making claims and objections.	28th February	14th March	28th February
Corrupt and illegal practices lists	17th February	3rd March	17th February
List of claimants	28th February	15th March	28th February
List of persons to whose registra- tion notice of objection has been given.	28th February	15th March	28th February
List of claimants to whose registra- tion notice of objection has been given.	10th day after publication.	10th day after publication.	10th day after publication.
Register	Date of coming into force of next register.	Date of coming into force of next register.	Date of coming into force of next register.

Forms of Information from Householders, etc. (England and Wales).

3. The following Forms shall be inserted under Heading I in Schedule I to the Order, in substitution for Form A:—

FORM A (Householder).

*Return by the Occupier of a Dwelling-house, Tenement, or Lodgings Let Unfurnished.
(See Instructions at end.)*

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACTS.

To [or the Householder or Occupier] at

In order to assist the preparation of the Parliamentary and Local Government Registers of Electors, you are hereby required in pursuance of the above-mentioned Acts to complete this Return and deliver it or send it by Post to the undersigned within.....days from this date.

Date.....

Registration Officer.

(A person who fails to give the required Information or who gives False Information is liable to a Penalty of £20.)

PART I. PARTICULARS OF PREMISES OCCUPIED.

Give full Postal Address of Occupier's Premises.

Give description of Premises, i.e., whether Dwelling-house, Flat, Tenement, Lodgings Let Unfurnished, or Dwelling-house inhabited by virtue of service (See Instruction 3).

If any room or rooms are let off unfurnished by Occupier, give name of the person to whom let in each case. (This information is required to enable the Registration Officer to supply a separate Form to each sub-tenant).

PART II.—PARTICULARS AS TO RESIDENTS OF FULL AGE.

Enter below particulars of every Man and Woman who ordinarily resides on the above premises, including the occupier and occupier's wife or husband and members of occupier's family, and domestics and boarders, and lodgers in lodgings let to them furnished.

[illegible]

* Here insert *last* day of qualifying period.

† Here insert *first* day of qualifying period.

PART III.—MEN SERVING IN HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES.

Enter below particulars of any man serving in His Majesty's Forces and aged 21 years or over on * who would be residing on the before-mentioned premises if he were not so serving.

[illegible]

* Here insert *last* day of qualifying period.

DECLARATION.

I declare that the particulars given in this Return are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date

Signature

[Adding where necessary title or other description, e.g., for a woman "Mrs.," "Miss," etc.]

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING IN FORM.

(To be printed on the form.)

1. On application being made at the address given hereon you will be given any help needed in filling the Form up.
2. The occupier, for the purpose of the information required, would generally be the person paying rent for the house or rooms let unfurnished, or the owner if he is himself the householder.
3. Occupation by virtue of service applies only where the person inhabits a dwelling-house by virtue of any office, service or employment, and the employer does not himself inhabit the dwelling-house—e.g., a manager, caretaker, lodge-keeper, etc.
4. The qualifying period is the three months ending on *..... except that in the case of a naval or military voter or of a man who had served in the Forces during any part of that three months, and has ceased so to serve, the period is one month only ending on that day.

* Here insert last day of qualifying period.

FORM D (Occupier of Business Premises, etc.).

Return by Occupier of Business Premises, Institution, Land, etc.

[NOTE.—The Order in Council here contains the prescribed form for above purpose. For considerations of space we hold over the publication of this form until our next issue.—ED., "L.O."]

Form of Register (England and Wales).

4. The Form of Register under Heading XI. in Schedule I to the Order shall be amended by the substitution of the following Index letters, showing the nature of the qualification of an elector:—

For Men.

- R=Residence qualification
- B=Business premises qualification.
- O=Occupation qualification.
- D=Qualification through wife's occupation.

For Women.

- Rw=Residence qualification.
- Bw=Business premises qualification.
- Ow=Occupation qualification.
- Dw=Qualification through husband's occupation.

NM=Naval or military voter.

[The succeeding clauses of the Order are not of general importance or have reference only to Northern Ireland.—ED., "L.O."]

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